



## MINUTES

### BOARD OF EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSIONERS

January 18, 2017 at 2:30 P.M. in City Hall, Rm. 303

#### **Present:**

Commissioner Jeffery Roman, Chair  
Commissioner Chez Ordonez, Co-Chair  
Commissioner Tony Snell  
Commissioner Mayhoua Moua  
Sharon Robinson, Dept. of Administration  
Jessica Langill, Dept. of Administration  
Ben Roovers, City Attorney's Office  
Rebecca Rabatin, DOA Budget & Management  
Mark Nicolini, City Budget & Management  
Nate Holton, Milwaukee County Office of African American Affairs  
Syd Robinson, Milwaukee LGBT Community Center  
Shelley Gregory, Milwaukee LGBT Community Center

#### **Absent:** Commissioner Marquette Baylor

Commissioner Sheila Ashley  
Commissioner Aldira Aldape

The meeting was called to order at 2:35 p.m. by Commissioner Roman.

#### ***1. Approval of minutes from December 21, 2016 meeting***

Commissioner Roman moved to approve the meeting minutes from the December 21, 2016 meeting. Commissioner Snell seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.

#### ***2. Budget Presentation – Mark Nicolini (Budget & Management Director)***

Commissioner Roman thanked Mark Nicolini for attending the ERC meeting to talk about the budget. Commissioner Roman stated the ERC requested this presentation to get a better idea of the budget approval process as the Commission works on the ordinance rewrite.

Mr. Nicolini stated that any of the Commissioners can contact him directly with any questions or follow-up information. Mr. Nicolini stated the city has been able to do a good amount for the community even though the budget is very tight and it can be hard to make ends meet. Mr. Nicolini explained the budget structure and stated the city of Milwaukee has a 1.5 billion dollar budget and supports 6700 FTE employees and 26 city departments. He stated 1.2 billion comes from the tax levy, \$264 million coming from the property tax levy. Mr. Nicolini went over the 4 components of the tax levy supported budget; general city purposes (operating budget-police, fire, sanitation, health department, libraries, etc.), retirement provisions (pensions), capitol and city debt budget, and the contingent fund. Mr. Nicolini stated the 3 revenue sources that

provide the most funding to the annual budget are intergovernmental revenue, property taxes, and user charges. He also stated that increasing the funding coming in from these areas was very limited. Mr. Nicolini also there has been a substantial decrease in how much the city receives from State Shared Revenue and the Expenditure Restraint Program (ERP). He stated the money no longer coming to the city is currently going to medical assistance, elementary and secondary school aid, and corrections. He stated the city has a 12-16 million dollar “deficit” (difference between available revenues and ongoing service costs) in the 2018 budget but that it will end up balanced in the end.

Commissioner Ordonez asked if local municipalities had any power in addressing the steep decline in funds from the State Shared Revenue. Mr. Nicolini stated there have been persistent attempts to conserve and grow the shared revenue amount (Milwaukee belongs to the League of Municipalities), but he stated the efforts have not been very successful. Commissioner Snell asked if any of the budget reductions disproportionately affect marginalized communities. Mr. Nicolini stated he would get back to the Commission with a more specific report, but that in the previous years the biggest reductions have been seen in the Fire Department, and that they have tried to make reductions in places that do not have direct impact on services. He also stated there were some deductions in the Department of Public Works and the Department of Neighborhood Services Code Enforcement. Sharon Robinson stated that the city has worked to use grants and other funding sources to keep low income programming running. She shared that now that DOA has a grant manager they have brought in over 500 million dollars in grants since 2004.

Mr. Nicolini went on to talk about the Mayor’s Strong Neighborhoods Plan started in 2014 which focused on loan programs, demolitions, commercial investment, loans for small home repairs, selling improved properties that the city took over due to tax foreclosure, etc. He also talked about city programs (like KIVA) which provide loans for people of color looking to start a business. Mr. Nicolini shared that the city has worked to improve the Resident Preference Program. He talked about initiatives started by DOA including a college savings program and initiatives such as Milwaukee Fatherhood, My Brother’s Keeper, etc.). Mr. Nicolini shared the city has also started programs and initiatives to bring the city into ADA Compliance.

Mr. Nicolini stated the city has also been focusing on Employment Diversity. Commissioner Roman asked if there were any initiatives focused on hiring a diverse group of employees for the large development projects taking place downtown. Ms. Robinson stated that the Workforce Development programs focus on that. Commissioner Ordonez asked if the city tracks the needs of companies/developers and any reasons they may not want to develop in the city. Mr. Nicolini stated the ERC should follow up with the Area Workforce Investment Board for that information. Commissioner Snell asked about oversight and tracking of success. Mr. Nicolini stated

the Mayor's Accountability and Management department do a good job with oversight on these programs. He also stated the city does a lot of data analysis and tracking.

Mr. Nicolini went over the Budget Process, stating that the city sends out budget instructions in the middle of March, requests are due in the beginning of May, and then the Budget Office works on the budget through September. Mr. Nicolini stated the best time to get budget input from people would be between May and September. He stated the Mayor has to present the budget by September 28<sup>th</sup>. He then went on to say the Finance & Personnel Committee holds budget hearings in October, budget amendment hearings take place the first week of November, and then the Common Council should adopt the 2018 budget by November 10, 2017. Commissioner Roman asked about ways the community can be involved in the budget process before the hearings. He also asked if the ERC could help facilitate community involvement. Mr. Nicolini stated community members should attend town hall meetings in their neighborhoods, and that he welcomes the ERC to assist with community involvement prior to the hearings in October. Commissioner Roman stated the ERC wanted to be more proactive in being involved in the full budget process. Commissioner Ordonez and Commissioner Snell stated that the ERC is planning to start meeting out in the community and will work toward getting the community involved in the budget planning. Mr. Nicolini advised it would be helpful to focus any community meetings about the budget on a certain issue in order to streamline the process.

### ***3. Office of African American Affairs – Nate Holton (Milwaukee County Deputy Chief of Staff)***

Commissioner Roman introduced Nate Holton from Milwaukee County's Office of African American Affairs. He stated that as advocates for the community and conduits of information, the ERC had requested more information about the Office of African American Affairs. Commissioner Roman stated that he had reached out to Alderman Rainey to speak to the ERC about the city's Office of African American Affairs, but that he was unable to attend the January meeting.

Nate Holton stated that the county is having the same budget struggles as the city, and that their resources are declining as well. Mr. Holton stated that the county is working to increase the vehicle registration fee to \$60 to help with the deficit. He invited the ERC to be involved in the county budget process, and to encourage the community as well. Mr. Holton stated that one of the positions in the County's Office of African American Affairs will have a grants manager that will be working to raise funding.

Mr. Holton stated the County's Office of African American Affairs was approved and fully funded in the summer of 2016. He stated there are 4 full-time positions (Director, Grants Manager, Research and Programs Manager, and the Community Engagement Specialist). He stated there will be a report put out in the near future. Mr. Holton stated that Milwaukee is still amongst the worst for racial inequalities. He stated the

infrastructure has been built around data and reporting and has focused on workforce development, black business development, and a program called Opportunity Knocks in which the county takes foreclosed homes and has people from the House of Corrections renovate the house (providing them with job training), and then selling the house to a Section 8 Voucher holder. He stated they are currently piloting the program and have started with 1 home. Mr. Holton stated another big focus is Criminal Justice Reform. He stated they would be bringing in data from CCAP to analyze outcomes, to measure recidivism of the County's re-entry programs, and finding the individuals eligible to have their record expunged.

Mr. Holton stated there would be a meeting on January 31<sup>st</sup> (place and time TBA) that would cover the 2017 State Legislative Agenda and criminal justice reform. He said the County's OAAA's main focus is legislation. Commissioner Roman asked if the County's OAAA was looking at Juvenile Justice issues and Mr. Holton stated they were only focusing on adult Criminal Justice, but that the County's Department of Health and Human Services was focusing on Juvenile Justice because they oversee the system.

Commissioner Roman asked to talk about the connection between the County's and City's OAAA. Mr. Holton stated the city has presented a proposal that the County is currently looking over, but that details have not been ironed out yet. He stated the County's OAAA will be more of a policy making office, which makes it important for their office to be at the County Courthouse. He stated the City is funding a Community Coordinator that would report directly to the City's OAAA, but that the County would work with the City to iron out those details. Commissioner Ordonez asked where actual community engagement would take place if the County's OAAA is focused primarily on policy. He also asked how the ERC can support the County and City's OAAA. Mr. Holton stated the County's Community Engagement Specialist would be doing most of the direct community engagement work and then would support the local organizations that have already been working on community engagement. Mr. Holton stated the ERC should get connected with the County's Human Rights Commission. He also stated that the County's OAAA could use help from the ERC in community outreach.

Commissioner Ordonez asked when the County would have a response to the proposal from the City. Mr. Holton stated they would respond within the next month and that the County's OAAA would be fully staffed by April.

#### ***4. Ordinance Rewrite Update***

Commissioner Ordonez stated that the new ERC Commissioners had the same things in mind as the rest of the Commission when it came to the Ordinance rewrite. Commissioner Ordonez went over some of the proposed changes including updating language, keeping internal review of City Departments, keeping the focus on

prevention and education instead of mitigation, and transgender protections and complaint process. He also stated that the sub-committee proposed that employment protections be removed from the ordinance since DER and the Equal Rights Division handle employment complaints.

Commissioner Ordonez stated there would be a second ordinance rewrite meeting on February 10<sup>th</sup> and then the ordinance would be presented to the whole ERC body for review. Commissioner Snell stated that Ben Roovers was working on a rewrite which would be available for the sub-committee rewrite meeting. Commissioner Roman asked about the next steps of the rewrite. Director Robinson stated that the sub-committee would discuss the next steps in the meeting in February, but also that the chair (Commissioner Roman) and other Commissioners should be reaching out to Council members to give them a heads up on the rewrite. She advised that the Commission follow protocol when meeting with the Council members (Council President, Chair of Judiciary Committee, etc.). She also stated that the Mayor's Office has been notified.

Commissioner Roman asked about potential budget considerations (fiscal note) that may be attached to the ordinance rewrite. Commissioner Ordonez stated we could discuss that in the second rewrite meeting, but Director Robinson stated it would be difficult to add resources/funding to the ERC. Commissioner Snell stated that the Commission would work to use the current staff and resources and Commissioner Ordonez stated this discussion could be part of strategic planning in the future. Commissioner Roman stated he would like the Ordinance Rewrite to be a standing item on the agenda. There was a discussion about a realistic timeline of rewriting the ordinance and doing the groundwork to introduce it to the Council. Commissioner Roman stated he was ready to reach out to key players right away. Commissioner Snell moved that the Commission give the Chair and Vice-Chair to move forward with communications at their discretion. Commissioner Moua seconded.

Commissioner Ordonez asked who the leading transgender advocacy organization is in the City of Milwaukee (besides the LGBT Community Center). Commissioner Snell stated he has reached out to Forge and the Community Center. He introduced Shelley Gregory and Syd Robinson from the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center and stated they would be willing to work with the ERC on the Ordinance Rewrite. Shelley Gregory thanked the Commission for taking on the ordinance rewrite and stated that the ordinance had both practical and symbolic meaning for the transgender people in our community who do not have many protections. Shelley talked about the importance of community input for the rewrite and stated that it may be beneficial to leave employment protections for sexual orientation in the ordinance. Commissioner Roman asked the subcommittee to put together a robust community engagement strategy for the rewrite. Commissioner Snell also stated that he had reached out to the National Center for Transgender Equality and they were willing and ready to look at the rewrite and assist in the process. Commissioner Ordonez stated that it was not the intention to

remove protections surrounding employment, but that it was important for the Commission to find where they can be most effective and what the ERC has oversight of. He also talked about the importance of having stakeholders involved. Shelley stated that the LGBT Community Center was ready and eager to assist in any way possible.

### ***5. Community Meeting Locations***

Commissioner Snell moved that the ERC schedule the April ERC meeting at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center. Commissioner Roman suggested there be an after-hours meeting that day to accommodate community members who work. The April 19<sup>th</sup> ERC meeting will be held at 5:30pm at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center (1110 N. Market Street, floor 2).

### ***6. Community Dialogue / Events***

Jessica Langill stated that Human Rights Day is on December 9<sup>th</sup> this year, which is a Saturday, so the ERC could reserve the City Hall rotunda on the 8<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> for their event. Commissioner Snell stated that there would be more traffic on Friday. He also stated that the County wanted to partner with the City for this event. Commissioner Roman appointed Commissioner Snell and Moua to work on the event.

Commissioner Snell stated that there was an event going on for the LGBT Chamber of Commerce later today at the Pfister. Ms. Langill also reminded the Commissioners that she had sent out information about the Alverno LGBT Forum and that if they wanted to attend they could find the registration info in their email. Commissioner Moua stated the Hmong National Development Conference that would bring Hmong people from across the country to Milwaukee on April 21-23. She stated she would send information to Ms. Langill to get out to the Commissioners and they could think about being involved/sponsorship. Commissioner Roman stated that February was Black History Month.

### ***7. Next Meeting is Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> at 2:30pm***

Commissioner Ordonez stated he would not be present for this meeting. Commissioner Roman stated that the ERC would meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month for the remainder of 2017.

### ***8. Adjourn***

Meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

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jml